

**PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE  
REVALIDATED LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS INTERVIEW (LSI)  
AND ADVISORY SERVICES**

Directorate of Human Resources  
Human Resources Development Division  
CEHR-D  
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*[Note: Updated with new Gallup telephone numbers and points of contact—24 Nov 2003]*

## **PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE FOR USE OF THE REVALIDATED LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS INTERVIEW (LSI) AND ADVISORY SERVICES**

### **Revalidating the Leadership Competency Interview (LCI)**

The LCI has been in place to add a consideration of leadership to the selection process for SES, GS 15 and GS 14 supervisory positions since 1994. In the intervening years we have experienced many changes in the Corps that caused us to reflect on what is the most effective leadership for our organization. In doing so we also asked whether the LCI still effectively helps us select leaders who can best move us into the future. In order to address this issue, the LCI was revalidated in 2000. The revalidation was part of our efforts to insure that the LCI measures what it is supposed to measure while restructuring it, where appropriate, to meet our changing needs.

As a result of the revalidation, the LCI is a more focused and powerful interview that better differentiates between the “good” and the “best” of our leadership talent. ***The revalidated interview is called the Leadership Strengths Interview (LSI).*** This change in name from Leadership Competency Interview to Leadership Strengths Interview better reflects that the interview does not measure knowledge and skills, but identifies insights brought forth during the interview regarding the candidates’ talents to be an effective leader in the Corps. The term “strengths” refers to talents developed to provide consistent, near perfect performance in a given activity.

The revalidation process relates performance on the LSI to the broader criterion of ratings of effective leadership by co-workers, direct reports and supervisors. It also includes a research dimension to insure that we are addressing our leadership needs of the future. A more in-depth discussion of leadership for a learning organization may be found in the forthcoming Corps doctrine on Leadership for a Learning Organization. These procedures provide step-by-step instructions for obtaining Gallup services to use LSI in panel selections.

### **1. Procurement of LSI and Advisory Services**

HQUSACE has in place a USACE Leadership Assessment Interview and Advisory Services contract with the Gallup Organization. Because it is corporate in scope, use of this contract simplifies the procurement of the LSI and other leadership assessment advisory services. Use of this contract is ***mandatory*** for procurement of ***all*** LSI and advisory services from the Gallup Organization. ***This applies to selections for all SES, GS-15 and supervisory GS-14 positions, as well as any other positions within the Corps of Engineers for which a decision has been made to use the LSI as part of the selection process.*** Instructions on how to obtain LSI assessments and other advisory services

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under this contract, to include pricing information, may be viewed on the CEHR Homepage at <http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/D/leadtrans.htm>.

### **2. Initiating use of the USACE Leadership Assessment Interview and Advisory Services contract**

Once the number of candidates to be interviewed and other desired services have been determined, complete the PR&C for Delivery Order and the Leadership Advisory Services Request Form (see Page 8) and forward to your contracting office. You may obtain *current* pricing information on the CEHR homepage at <http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/D/leadtrans.htm>. Please note that a new line item has been added for assessment of previously interviewed candidates (0003AP). The following line items apply to the panel selection process:

- 0001AA - Leadership Assessment Interviews (LSI)
- 0001AB - Telephonic Feedback Sessions for Panel
- 0001AC -In Person Feedback Session for Selecting Officials/Panels
- 0001AH – Travel (Cost for travel of Gallup Analyst to provide in person feedback for selecting officials/panels)
- 0001AP - Leadership Assessment for Previously Interviewed Candidates

### **3. Transmit the Leadership Advisory Services Request Form**

You may also send an advance copy of the Leadership Advisory Services Request Form (see page 8) electronically via email, to <[bill\\_thompson@gallup.com](mailto:bill_thompson@gallup.com)> or <[will\\_travis@gallup.com](mailto:will_travis@gallup.com)>, or fax to Will Travis at 402-938-5916. You may also request this form from Bill Thompson (402-938-6741) or Will Travis (402-938-6756) at Gallup.

### **4. Project timeline**

Coordinate a project timeline with Gallup so that candidates complete their Gallup Interviews 7 business days prior to the feedback date desired. Contact Gallup to discuss the project timeline immediately after the Delivery Order and Leadership Assessment and Advisory Services Request Form have been submitted. (Note: You may also coordinate this with Gallup **PRIOR** to the issuance of the Delivery Order and Leadership Assessment and Advisory Service Request by your local Contracting Office.)

### **5. Pre-interview notification.**

a. Selecting officials will notify those candidates on the referral list who are selected for further consideration on the purpose of and procedures for completing the LSI. Use the enclosed memorandum template, *after* completion by the selecting organization, to notify

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candidates (*see page 9*). Indicate the name of a point of contact in your office that candidates can contact in the event they have questions. Candidates should be notified after the procedures for obtaining LSI and advisory services have been completed.

b. When you notify individuals of their candidacy for the position, tell them to contact Gallup to schedule their interview within 48 hours of your message to them, and to plan to schedule their interview so that it is complete 7 business days prior to the feedback date you have determined with Gallup using the timeline scenario outlined above.

6. **Monitor the progress of the selection project.** Keep in touch with Gallup as the project progresses. Notify them of any changes in the project such as candidates that drop out, any changes in your feedback date, time, and the phone number Gallup is to call for the feedback session. Also, check with Gallup a few days prior to the scheduled feedback to insure that all Privacy Act/Consent Notice Statements (page 9) have been received at Gallup.

7. **Participation voluntary.** Candidates may choose not to participate in the LSI. They *must* indicate this in writing on the Interview Consent Notice provided (*see page 10*). Candidates must be informed that if they decide not to fully participate or disclose information, they may not receive full consideration for the position.

8. **Important note.** The LSI is not a substitute for evaluating the experience, education and training of candidates for senior positions. The results provided by Gallup will be used in conjunction with other information about candidates. Candidates must be informed that information from the LSI will *never* be used as the sole factor in making a selection.

9. **Interview Consent Notice.** *All candidates* must complete and fax this form to Gallup. The Interview Consent Notice will be retained for a three-year period from the initial interview, during which time candidates' interview results will be released to selection panels. ***Interview results will not be released to selection panels without the signed Interview Consent Notice.***

### 10. Frequency of interviews

a. Candidates *may not* retake the assessment interview for a period of three years after the initial interview regardless of whether they were interviewed using the former LCI or the LSI. If they have been interviewed within the last three years, Gallup will reconfigure their interview results to conform with the LSI. Therefore, all candidates will be compared using the LSI. Interview results will be maintained and referred to Selection Panels for other leadership positions for which they are being considered. ***There is no option to retake the interview within the 3-year period.***

b. *If the last interview is more than 3 years old, the candidate must re-take the interview.* Additionally, whether using the interview on file or being re-interviewed, the candidate must first check the appropriate block on the Interview Consent Notice and return it to Gallup.

c. Candidates should be informed that Gallup research shows, and our pilot test confirmed, that interview results do not change to any significant degree over time. Both LCI and LSI results reflect a candidate's consistent strengths (i.e., recurring patterns of thought, feeling and behavior that contribute to his or her success as a leader). The score on the LSI is a comparison of a candidate's strengths with those of the most effective leaders in the Corps. When we revalidated the interview, we updated the criterion against which candidates are compared. LSI reflects the developments in effective leadership in the Corps over six years of implementing the former LCI. This change in criterion could result in some minor differences in how a candidate compares to our most effective leaders. In most cases, the differences will be insignificant, and not affect a candidate's overall standing.

However, some candidates may notice some difference stemming from changes in the configuration of the interview feedback itself. LSI feedback was designed to provide a more balanced view of the four leadership dimensions:

- Drive to execute
- Direction
- Relationship
- Management

**11. Interview method.** A Gallup Interviewer conducts the interview by telephone. Candidates are asked to call Gallup and schedule their interview in advance, and if possible within 48 hours of their notice of candidacy. To take the interview, candidates should find a location where they can talk in uninterrupted privacy for approximately one hour. LSI questions are "structured," which means they are asked exactly as written and the interviewer does no probing. The best performing candidates are those who are spontaneous and honest, describing events just as they see them. This approach produces a useful and relatively stress-free interview. Gallup tape-records all interviews (with the permission of the participants). A Gallup analyst codes the interview and produces a profile for the candidate.

**12. Feedback to candidates.**

a. **Using LSI interviews.** Candidates previously interviewed on the former LCI received a written, narrative feedback describing their strengths and the positive aspects of their leadership. This feedback is still valid, and could be used in conjunction with coaching and mentoring for leadership development. When candidates' LCI results are reconfigured to conform to the revalidated LSI, they will receive by mail a graphic

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illustration of their relative strengths on the four dimensions measured, and descriptions of the behaviors our most effective leaders display in these dimensions.

b. **LSI interviews.** Candidates newly interviewed on LSI, either because they are new to the interview process or were previously interviewed more than 3 years ago, will also receive by mail a graphic illustration of their relative strengths on the four leadership dimensions. Additionally, they will be offered the opportunity to discuss their results with the Gallup analyst who interviewed them. They should schedule this feedback session after they have reviewed their results and given thought to the descriptions of effective leader behaviors provided and how they relate to their performance. This 30-minute feedback dialogue is available only to candidates newly interviewed on the LSI, and is provided at no additional cost to the candidate or their organization.

13. **Feedback to panels.** Gallup will not provide the depiction of relative strengths it sends to candidates to selecting officials or panel members. Instead, a Gallup representative may provide verbal feedback either on site or by phone to discuss, in-depth, the overall interview process and candidate rankings. Gallup will be prepared to conduct this discussion approximately one week after all candidates are interviewed. Included in this discussion will be candidate rankings for those individuals who have been interviewed in the last 3 years (reconfigured to conform to the revalidated LSI for those interviewed on the former LCI) and who have consented to the use of their assessment interview already on file. All discussion regarding candidates' performance will be benchmarked to the LSI.

14. **Scoring.** The total LSI score is the most predictive of success. Based on the interview results (total score), candidates are assigned to one of the following three categories:

- Candidates who have leadership competence comparable to leadership talents identified in a study of the Corps' most effective leaders. These candidates should be able to exercise their leadership power and successfully move the Corps into the future.
- Candidates who have some of the leadership competencies identified in the study of the best Corps leaders. These candidates have some potential to drive the Corps into the future. However, they are not as powerful as the most effective Corps leaders. As a consequence, these candidates' impact is likely to be contingent upon how well they fit their particular leadership situation and the support they receive.
- Candidates who have fewer of the leadership competencies identified in the study of the most effective Corps leaders. A move to the next level may not set them up to replicate the successes they are having in their current position.

15. **Education and training.** It is critical that individuals selected for panels understand the concepts and methods used in the LSI process and understand the competencies being measured. All panel members should be provided with an orientation. HR directors

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suggested that we put one on CD so that all new members could “study” what they are about to get into on the LSI. We are in the process of developing several learning opportunities including a CD and a web-based interactive seminar. Until these are completed, a summary of information regarding the LSI can be found on the Directorate of Human Resources [CEHR] Homepage at:

<http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/D/leadtrans.htm>

A listing of the “*Behavioral Indicators for USACE Leadership Talent*” is on pages 11-13 of this guide. If no panel member can provide this service, the Directorate of Human Resources will arrange an orientation in the form of a slide show accompanied by a telephone briefing. To schedule this briefing contact JoAnn Eisenberg, CEHR-D, at [joann.b.eisenberg@hq02.usace.army.mil](mailto:joann.b.eisenberg@hq02.usace.army.mil). Gallup also will provide, at no additional cost, a brief orientation to the process, if desired, prior to providing feedback to the panel. The information on the HR Homepage regarding “*Behavioral Indicators for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Leadership Talent*” should be shared with all panel members prior to panel meetings.

16. **Waivers.** Organizational requests to waive using the LSI in supervisory GS-14, GS-15 and SES selections will be submitted through the chain of command to the USACE Directorate of Human Resources. Waiver requests will include a complete justification for not using the interview process.

Individuals may not request waivers. If they do not wish to participate, they only need to indicate this on the Interview Consent Notice.

17. **Discretionary use of LSI.** Also, note that it is possible that the LSI may be used as part of the selection process for positions outside of the SES, GS-15, and supervisory GS-14 group; use of the LSI in such instances will be determined locally.

18. **Temporary promotions.** In accordance with the 18 July 97 memorandum, Recruitment for GS-15 Positions—Supplemental Guidance, temporary actions over six months will be filled using the full corporate selection process.

19. **DOD priority placement candidates.** LSI interviews are not required for candidates registered in the DOD Priority Placement Program.

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**LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT & ADVISORY SERVICES REQUEST FORM**

**This form may be found on the CEHR Homepage at:**

**<http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/D/leadtrans.htm>**



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CE(OFFICE SYMBOL)

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR (CANDIDATES TO BE INTERVIEWED)

SUBJECT: Leadership Strengths Interview (LSI)

1. You are among the best-qualified applicants for the position of (INSERT JOB TITLE) at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, (INSERT LOCATION). To help us learn more about you, we have contracted with Gallup, Inc. to conduct leadership strength interviews.

2. In 1987, senior leaders of the Corps decided to find a way to measure leadership when selecting senior executives. Subsequently, a telephonic, structured interview instrument was developed by Gallup and validated by representatives of the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). The interview, which takes approximately one hour, is conducted by Gallup and tape recorded. The information is analyzed by a consultant and an assessment of leadership strength is derived. In filling vacant positions, the information supplements existing candidate information, constituting one factor among several considered by selecting officials.

3. After interviews are completed, Gallup mails a confidential feedback report directly to each applicant. You should receive this report within 2 months of your interview. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your results with the Gallup analyst who interviewed you. We urge you to take advantage of this developmental opportunity. If you have been interviewed by Gallup within the past 3 years, we will use the results of that interview. If it has been more than 3 years since the interview, you must request a new interview. Please note that Gallup research and our pilot testing shows that interview results normally do not change over time.

4. All interviews are conducted from Gallup's headquarters. You are urged to participate in the process to receive maximum consideration for selection. To schedule your interview, please call 1-800-789-3041 [if you are Overseas, call 402-951-2003 and ask for the Interviewing Center] before (INSERT DATE) and identify yourself as a candidate for the (INSERT JOB TITLE) position at the Corps of Engineers. Plan to schedule your interview between 0800 and 2000 hours (Eastern Time) between now and (INSERT DATE). Also, please complete the attached Interview Consent Notice and FAX to Gallup, attention Bill Thompson, 402-938-6741. Gallup must have this form in order to conduct the interview or release information.

5. To keep to our timetable, we urge you to respond quickly. Contact (INSERT NAME OF LOCAL POC) if you have any questions. Choosing someone from a group of top candidates is difficult because of the high caliber of applicants. I appreciate your time and patience, and wish you well.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Encl

(INSERT SIGNATURE BLOCK)

## INTERVIEW CONSENT NOTICE

The purpose of this form is to record your willingness to participate in a telephonic interview used to assess your leadership abilities. The interview will be used as part of the selection process for:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert Job Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert Grade)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert Location)

The results of the interview will be provided orally to selection officials/panels and will be one among several sources of information used to make final selection decisions. If the information you supply is used for preparing reports, replying to correspondence and responding to grievances and complaints of non-selection and the procedural accuracy of the selection process, every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity.

Participation in and disclosure of information in the interview is voluntary. However, if you decide not to fully participate or disclose information, you may not receive full consideration for the position.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Last, First, Middle Initial)

Work telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Include Area Code)

Home telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Include Area Code)

### CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX:

- ☐ *I agree to participate in the assessment interview.*
- ☐ *I do not agree to participate in the assessment interview.*
- ☐ *Please use my assessment interview already on file.*

**I understand that I may not retake this interview for a period of 3 years. During this 3-year period, my results will be maintained and referred for other Corps of Engineers leadership positions for which I may be considered. I also understand that the interview questions are proprietary.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE FAX THIS FORM TO MR. WILL TRAVIS, GALLUP, INC.  
FAX: 402-938-5916

## **Behavioral Indicators for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

### **LEADERSHIP TALENT**

The four dimensions of Corps leadership talent assessed in LSI are Direction, Drive to Execute, Relationship, and Management.

#### **Direction**

A leader strong in Direction is purposeful and focused on a clear, personally meaningful vision, and provides motivation and unity through a clear, definitive picture of desired outcomes.

##### **Behavioral Indicators**

- Able to maintain a high degree of consistency in the workplace resulting in high levels of per person productivity.
- Is clear with colleagues and staff regarding expectations and goals.
- Vision of the business stretches far beyond that of his or her associates.
- Has the ability to make observations and interpret them within a larger context.
- Helps others see the value of the mission of their organization.

When Direction is weak, leaders will be easily distracted from their goals into diversionary activities, and may spend a great deal of time carrying out activities that have nothing to do with reaching their goals. They tend to prefer “hands-on” tasks, and may not communicate ideas and concepts clearly and understandably.

#### **Drive to Execute**

A leader strong in Drive to Execute is a positive force who continually influences others to achieve organizational and team effectiveness and is eager to fulfill missions and overcome challenges.

##### **Behavioral Indicators**

- Competent, credible and expert-like.
- Not given to making excuses - someone who initiates actions to head off problems before they occur.
- Someone who works through others rather than trying to do everything themselves.
- Someone who holds people individually accountable for their productivity.
- Self-confident and effective in roles where their decisions and actions are visible to others.

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When the Drive to Execute Dimension is weak, the leader will find it difficult to lay claim and commit oneself to big goals where risk is inherent. He or she will settle for average performance, and is content to be a follower. He or she will study,

analyze, and talk about actions, but is rarely the one who says, "Let's do it!" and gets on about it.

### **Relationship**

A leader strong in Relationship understands and engages people as a catalyst of team development and customer involvement.

Behavioral Indicators:

- Someone that is trustworthy and helps others feel valued.
- Someone who creates an environment that encourages others to learn.
- Someone that is spirit giving who makes work fun and strengthens camaraderie.
- Inspires a sense of team and is effective at getting people to be mutually supportive
- Approachable and responsive to the needs of others.

When the Relationship Dimension is weak, the leader feels threatened by talented persons and makes life difficult for them. He or she will have difficulty getting others to participate in common goals, and there will be a lack of collaboration among staff members.

### **Management**

A leader strong in Management is a perceptive decision-maker who plans effectively and utilizes resources optimally.

Behavioral Indicators

- Someone who gets colleagues and staff to look at problems in different ways.
- Encourages and supports change or experimentation to improve operational procedures.
- Effectively coordinates complex events and projects.
- Objective minded, strongly inclined to avoid being judgmental and looks for facts to guide decisions or draw conclusions.
- Utilizes resources effectively.
- Cool under pressure and able to manage effectively in times of emergency.

A leader weak in the Management Dimension has a difficult time dealing with change. He or she is likely to describe accomplishments in subjective terms, and is more likely to rate the personality rather than performance of workers.

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**Research Dimension:** We recognize that the future is more volatile and uncertain than ever, and our continuing success will require leaders more oriented to the future and able to strategize a path through chaotic and complex events and trends. To address this need, we have added a research dimension to the LCI. Candidates' performance on this Strategic Dimension will not be included in the interview results reported to Selecting Panels until the research is completed.

### **Strategic**

A leader strong in the Strategic dimension is a person with foresight who creates focus out of chaos, integrating all organizational activities, and motivating the organization to implement strategy. Someone who is an imaginative, yet logical, forward thinker, easily recognizes, anticipates, and prepares for multiple cause and effect relationships, and synthesizes dreams, innovations and human needs into actions and strategies that motivate others.

#### **Behavioral Indicators**

- A “big picture” conceptual thinker who can articulate a vivid message, that evokes images in the minds of the people they are talking to.
- They hold idealized beliefs about what they believe the future, can and should be like.
- They are passionate about growth and the opportunity to make things better
- Someone who is well informed and rich with ideas
- A powerful mental integrator and often recognized by others for their ability to conceive innovative actions or procedures to achieve objectives
- They have a strong need to learn. Discovery is a fundamental source of their conviction and energy. *For many, the customer is the principle subject of their study and they stay close to them in order to initiate actions to serve them.*
- Informed decision makers who carefully think through many options and select the one that offers the best possible solution.
- Helps others see what the future will look like. They can put their highly conceptual vision of the future into words and pictures that others can understand.
- Helps others visualize their own role in the future and help them actually see what they might be doing.
- They are mentally prepared to act because they think through situations before they encounter them and play out various scenarios in their mind.

A leader who is weak in the Strategic Dimension is more focused on short-term goals and management of day-to-day activities. He or she may feel burdened by the demands of change, and lack the foresight that leads to progressive action. They will not be the person to excite members about contributing to a positive future. They could also get bogged down in reactive “crisis management” or “damage control.”

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